

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-28 are active in this application, and Claims 1-2, 4-5, 8-9, 11, 16, 18 and 24 are amended. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-3, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by Sato et al. (USP 5,640,462); Claim 4 was rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Sato et al. in view of Rougee (USP 5,699,446); Claims 5-7 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Sato et al. in view of Chen et al. (USP 6,047,080); Claim 8 was rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Sato et al. in view of Mori et al. (USP 4,868,747); Claims 11-17 and 22-28 were rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Sato et al. and Slack (USP 6,487,432); and Claim 21 was rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over the combination of Sato et al. and Slack in view of Mori et al.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 1-28, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection is overcome because, in Applicant's view, amended independent Claims 1, 11, 16 and 24 patentably distinguish over Sato et al., Rougee, Chen et al., Mori et al. and Slack as discussed below.

Amended Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, "***a memory which stores a plurality of images,***" "***a designating section which designates a region of interest on not less than one of the plurality of images ...***" and "***a position estimating section which estimates corresponding areas on the remaining images of the plurality of images which correspond to the region of interest.***"

The Advisory Action dated July 6, 2006 indicates that Claim 1 does not include the element which requires the remaining images to have been collected prior to the designating

and estimating steps. However, Claim 1 is amended to further recite “a memory which stores a plurality of images.” It is respectfully submitted that this amendment clarifies that the images, on which the designating section designates a region of interest and a position estimating section estimates corresponding areas, are stored in the memory. That is, “the remaining images” are collected prior to the designating and estimating steps.

Instead, Sato et al. describes that position and width of the ROI *in the measuring object 9* are set, and information on rotating angle of the turn table 4 is transferred to the ROI control apparatus 17 (Sato et al. at column 6, lines 48-51). Consequently, the position and the range 8 (the position indicated with a broad line in FIG.5) of the translation of the scanner 3 are determined (Sato et al. at column 6, lines 52-54) and data on the ROI of *the measuring object* are collected (Sato et al. at column 7, lines 8-9). That is, Sato et al. describes a process to collect data on the ROI of *the measuring object*, but does not disclose designating the ROI on one of images collected and stored in a memory, and estimating areas corresponding to the ROI on the remaining images of the images collected and stored in the memory.

Thus, Sato et al. fails to teach or suggest “a memory which stores a plurality of images,” “a designating section which designates a region of interest on not less than one of the plurality of images ...” and “a position estimating section which estimates corresponding areas on the remaining images of the plurality of images which correspond to the region of interest,” as recited in Claim 1.

Further, Rougee, Chen et al., Mori et al. and Slack also fail to teach or suggest “a memory which stores a plurality of images,” “a designating section which designates a region of interest on not less than one of the plurality of images ...” and “a position estimating section which estimates corresponding areas on the remaining images of the plurality of images which correspond to the region of interest,” as recited in Claim 1.

Similarly, Sato et al., Rougee, Chen et al., Mori et al. and Slack fail to teach or suggest “a memory which stores a plurality of 2D images which constitute a 3D image of a predetermined diagnosis target,” “a designating section which allows an operator to designate a region of interest on the 3D image” and “a position estimating section which estimates corresponding areas on the plurality of 2D images which correspond to the region of interest designated on the 3D image,” as recited in Claim 11.

Similarly, Sato et al., Rougee, Chen et al., Mori et al. and Slack fail to teach or suggest “a memory which stores a plurality of images,” “a designating section which allows an operator to designate a region of interest on not less than one of the plurality of images” and “a position estimating section which estimates corresponding areas on the remaining images of the plurality of images on the basis of a position of the designated region of interest,” as recited in Claim 16.

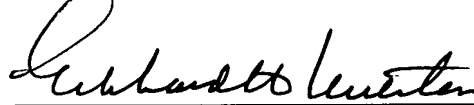
Similarly, Sato et al., Rougee, Chen et al., Mori et al. and Slack fail to teach or suggest “a memory which stores a plurality of 2D images which constitute a 3D image of a predetermined diagnosis target,” “a designating section which allows an operator to designate a region of interest on the 3D image” and “a position estimating section which estimates corresponding areas on the plurality of 2D images which correspond to the region of interest on the basis of a position of the region of interest designated on the 3D image,” as recited in Claim 24.

Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 11, 16 and 24 patentably distinguish over Sato et al., Rougee, Chen et al., Mori et al. and Slack. Therefore, Claims 1, 11, 16 and 24 and the pending Claims 2-10, 12-15, 17-23 and 25-28 dependent directly or indirectly from Claims 1, 11, 16 and 24 are believed to be allowable.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, it is believed that the outstanding rejection is overcome, and the application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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